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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 PARIS 004920

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SUBJECT: FRENCH RESPONSE ON JULY 18 GAERC

REF: STATE 124856

Classified By: Political Minister Counselor Josiah Rosenblatt for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

1. (U) We delivered reftel points on July 6 to Caroline Ferrari, sous-directeur for EU External Relations, and Jean-Louis Falconi, Chief of the MFA's CFSP unit. We discussed the points with Ferrari on July 8 and with Falconi on July 15.

Turkey

2. (C) Ferrari noted that she expected that negotiations for EU accession would begin as scheduled on October 3, but highlighted again that this would be a long process.

UN September HLE

3. (C) Falconi noted that the Europeans had already stated their position on the HLE at their June 16-17 European Council (available at www.eu2005.lu) -- at which they noted, among other conclusions, that Africa is a development priority for the Europeans; that they had decided on a new collective EU target of a ratio of 0.56 percent of Official Development Assistance to Gross National Income (ODA/GNI), which would result in an additional 20 billion euros a year for development assistance from the EU; and that the EU remains determined to find an agreement on the scope and arrangements for further multilateral debt relief, while it welcomed the G8 agreement to grant 100 percent debt relief to the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries. Falconi also noted that EU External Relations Commissioner Ferrero-Waldner will make a presentation at the September event.

Syria/Lebanon

4. (C) Falconi mentioned that Terje Roed-Larsen would be reporting to the foreign ministers on the situation in Lebanon. He said the preoccupations for the Europeans are 1) to consolidate Lebanese sovereignty 2) not to pressure Syria too toughly too publicly; 3) to end the blockade of the Lebanese border. Falconi said that the Europeans are quite firm with Syria, but that they believe that they must deal with Damascus in a low-profile manner so as not to harden the Syrians' position. He said that the West must sensitize Syria to its responsibilities in the region, especially vis-a-vis implications for terrorism. Ferrari also remarked on the differing positions of the U.S. and France on Syria, noting "you know we do not agree with you," implying that the French will support forward movement on Syria's Association Agreement.

Iran

5. (C) On Iran, Falconi noted that the French were also surprised by Ahmedinejad's victory, but said, "He's there now" and that it would be counter-productive to address him in a defiant tone before seeing how he performs. He said the French would advocate a wait-and-see attitude for that reason. He also noted that the EU3 are in the midst of preparing their offer for the Iranians, confirming that it would contain the red line that the Iranians could not resume enrichment of uranium. He said the EU3 offer would be "transparent and honest," and that if the Iranians refused the package, their intent would be clear. He repeated that the Europeans need strong international (read: U.S.) backing for their efforts.

Uzbekistan

6. (C) Falconi called the EU position on Uzbekistan "pretty firm" while characterizing the U.S. position as "ambiguous," contrasting that with the solidarity that he said is necessary from all actors in the region to press for reform. He noted that new OSCE Secretary General Marc Perrin de Brichambaut is slated to make his initial visit to Uzbekistan by the end of July, and said the French will reserve any judgment on whether to invoke the Moscow Mechanism until after they have heard his report. Falconi conceded that several member states believe that the EU should harden its

position against Karimov, but said that their relative firmness thus far has yet to bear any fruit.

Middle East

17. (C) Falconi said the EU will condemn the deteriorating security situation. He noted that the violence is counter-productive for the Palestinians and for their efforts to establish strong relations between the Israelis and Abbas. Even if Abbas criticizes the attacks, he said, they are a fact. Falconi said the Europeans will support Special Envoy Wolfensohn in his long-term plan to assure the viability of a Palestinian state. He said that the dynamic that exists now for change must not be stopped.

STAPLETON